Met Office

November 2004

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

A very dry month, with some areas only recording around a third of their November average rainfall. A dull month, particularly over western areas, although parts of eastern Scotland had slightly above average sunshine. Mean temperatures were around 1-2 °C above average, with night-time temperatures in Northern Ireland around 3 °C above average.

Kinbrace (Highland), recorded a temperature of -13.2 °C on 21st. 5 cm of lying snow was reported at Cottesmore (Rutland) and Wittering (Cambridgeshire) on 18th.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Despite it being a rather dull month, it was much drier than average. A cold snap in the second half of the month brought some snow, as well as sharp frosts and some hazardous freezing rain.

1st to 11th: A mild start with high pressure in charge. Despite the high, quite an active weather front affected the far south on the 2nd, giving some heavy rain. The high gradually drifted east into the Continent, allowing a weather front to spread south-east across all parts of the 4th. In the front's wake high pressure became established once again, allowing local air frost to develop in the south on the night of the 5th.

12th to 17th: The high receded west, allowing a cold front to sweep south across all parts. Pressure then built once again, allowing some very sunny days and quite sharp overnight frosts. Westerly winds helped to establish milder conditions later in the period.

18th to 20th: A much colder Arctic airflow developed on the 18th as a succession of fronts spread south and winds swung into the north. Gusty winds and a very sharp temperature drop were experienced on passage of the fronts. Heavy rain readily turned to snow over higher ground as well as lower ground in the north. Significant snow fell as far south as the Chilterns and 5 cm of lying snow was reported at Cottesmore (Rutland) and Wittering (Cambridgeshire). Thereafter it remained cold, but sunny, with some wintry showers and overnight frost.

21st to 30th: As milder air spread in from the west on the 21st, freezing rain became a hazard over the Pennines and eastern England. There was some disruption to transport, with black ice reported across some routes in Cumbria. There was also a marked temperature contrast across the region during the morning. Marham (Norfolk) recorded minus 7 °C, while Culdrose (Cornwall) recorded 11 °C in the much milder air. Towards the end of the month conditions generally became quieter. Weak weather fronts gave patchy rain and drizzle, but there was also some sunshine, as well as overnight mist and fog. Overnight frost became a feature on the 30th.

Scotland diary of highlights

A large area of high pressure was located to the south-west of the British Isles for much of November. Mild and cloudy air tracking around the high covered Scotland for much of the month, but there were also outbreaks of colder and brighter air from the north or north-west.

At the start of November a large anticyclone over England moved steadily east giving south or south-westerly winds over Scotland. The weather was mostly dry and mild with sunny periods in the north-east.

Cool and showery north-westerly winds invaded Scotland on the 4th but it was not long before mild and cloudy air arrived from the west. There were brighter skies in the east and at Aberdeen the temperature reached 16 °C on the 7th.

Rather cold conditions with plenty of sun in the south and some showers in the north held sway for most of the time between the 9th and the 13th. There was an interruption on the 11th as the mild and cloudy air returned from the west. On that day there was 23 mm of rain at Cassley, the temperature rose to 16 °C at Aberdeen and Kirkwall recorded a gust of 58 m.p.h.

From the 14th to the 17th it was mild and cloudy with rain at times, mostly in the west. It was also windy in the north at times with gusts of 69 m.p.h. at Wick on the 17th.

Northerly winds brought much colder weather between the 18th and 21st with some snow showers in the north. At Loch Glascarnoch the temperature never rose above freezing on the 19th and 20th and fell to -12 °C overnight. There was 5 cm of snow on the ground at Fair Isle but the south experienced sunny weather. On the 21st cloud and rain returned from the west with 70 mm recorded at Cassley. The rain froze on contact with the ground to give widespread icy conditions in the morning.

Mild and cloudy weather with a little rain prevailed from the 22nd to the 25th. The temperature rose to 14 °C at Strathallan on the 22nd and did not fall below 11 °C at Barra on the 25th.

Colder and clearer air from the north gave bright weather on the 26th and 28th, with an interruption due to rain from a low passing to the north on the 27th. Light westerly winds returned by the end of the month to give mostly cloudy weather with a little rain.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

A dry, dull and very mild month.

A mild, south to south-west airflow dominated for much of the month. Weather fronts crossed from the Atlantic on a regular basis but these were quite weak in nature and no noteworthy rainfall events occurred.

Most of the monthly rain fell in the third week. On the 18th, as winds turned north-westerly, rain turned to sleet and snow as the month's only cold snap occurred. The 20th was cold too, with lying snow blanketing much of County Antrim for a time between the 18th and 20th and over hills elsewhere. Night-time frost occurred during this period with minimums between -1 °C and -3 °C Celsius. Milder conditions soon returned however and lying snow had all but disappeared by the 21st when temperatures climbed to between 12 °C and 14 °C.

The remainder of the month was very quiet and a particularly dull period affected many parts with six consecutive sunless days in some areas between the 20th and the 25th. Skies brightened during the closing days and Belfast only narrowly missed having one of its dullest Novembers on record. Temperatures were well above normal everywhere, thanks in part to very high night-time temperatures. Many places had night-time values some 3 to 4 degrees above average. Not surprisingly, the occurrence of air and ground frost was well below average.

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